

General Certificate of Education
January 2005
Advanced Level Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS **GOV8**
Unit 8 Government and Politics – Synoptic Unit

Tuesday 1 February 2005 9.00 am to 11.00 am

In addition to this paper you will require:
a 12-page answer book.

Time allowed: 2 hours

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen. Pencil should only be used for drawing.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GOV8.
- Answer **both** the questions in **either** Section A **or** Section B **or** Section C **or** Section D.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- Mark allocations are shown in brackets.
- You will be assessed on your ability to use an appropriate form and style of writing, to organise relevant information clearly and coherently, and to use specialist vocabulary, where appropriate. The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will also be taken into account.

Advice

- You are advised to read through the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- You are advised to spend the same amount of time on each question.

SECTION A: POWER

If you choose this Section, answer Question A1 **and** Question A2.

When answering the questions that follow, you may wish to refer to the passage below but you do not have to do so. However, your answers must present material drawn from the range of your studies in Government and Politics.

A1 “The study of politics is essentially the study of power in society.” Discuss. (40 marks)

A2 “The structure of elites may be changing, but this does not mean that they are disappearing.” Discuss. (40 marks)

Text adapted from "How Britain's Elite has Changed", *The Economist*,
7 December 2002. Not reproduced here due to copyright constraints.

SECTION B: PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

If you choose this Section, answer Question B1 **and** Question B2.

When answering the questions that follow, you may wish to refer to the passage below but you do not have to do so. However, your answers must present material drawn from the range of your studies in Government and Politics.

- B1** “The problem with representative government is that it can mean different things to different people.” Discuss. *(40 marks)*
- B2** “Many modern political issues are beyond the understanding of most people.” Discuss. *(40 marks)*

Text adapted from HUGO YOUNG "Politics is for nerds. So it's no surprise only half of us vote", *The Guardian*, 24 October 2002. Not reproduced here due to copyright constraints.

Turn over ►

SECTION C: POLITICAL CULTURE

If you choose this Section, answer Question C1 **and** Question C2.

When answering the questions that follow, you may wish to refer to the passage below but you do not have to do so. However, your answers must present material drawn from the range of your studies in Government and Politics.

C1 How can the concept of political culture assist the study of politics? *(40 marks)*

C2 “In today’s world political cultures are increasingly subject to forces of change.” Discuss. *(40 marks)*

Text adapted from Jeremy Paxman, *The English: A Portrait of a People* (Penguin) 1999. Not reproduced here due to copyright constraints.

SECTION D: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

If you choose this Section, answer Question D1 **and** Question D2.

When answering the questions that follow, you may wish to refer to the passage below but you do not have to do so. However, your answers must present material drawn from the range of your studies in Government and Politics.

D1 “No political system can be regarded as stable without a high degree of continuity.” Discuss. (40 marks)

D2 “Change in the nature of parties reflects deeper changes in the political system itself.” Discuss. (40 marks)

The changing nature of UK political parties

The UK political parties have become less ideological than they were up to the 1980s. Arguably, the Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher were the last example of such a cohesive group, and even then there was a large dissident wing (the so-called ‘Wets’) which had fundamental problems with her policies. This means it is less clear what values the parties stand for. They are, therefore, very broad in their appeal and it is less true today that people join a particular party for ideological reasons.

Parties used to be characterised as great machines designed to identify policies and turn them into full-scale programmes to place before the electorate. What we have seen in the past two decades is the policy-making function increasingly removed from party activists and passed to leadership groups, independent ‘think tanks’, private advisers and pressure groups. Indeed it could now be argued that party memberships act more as pressure groups than policy formulation organisations.

Parties are recruiting fewer members than ever before. To some extent this is because fewer people wish to be politically active at all. But it is also because many see participation as more rewarding in narrow-based pressure groups than in large parties. New methods are being developed to replace the ‘legwork’ of party workers. Telephone canvassing and use of the Internet are the main examples of these changes.

Having said this, some traditional functions remain largely unchanged. Political leaders in the UK still emerge almost exclusively from the parties, working their way up through the party hierarchy, starting as humble party workers. Parties are still vital elements in elections and most of the political information received by the public comes from them. Parties also still reinforce support for the democratic process.

Source: adapted from NEIL MCNAUGHTON, “The changing nature of UK political parties”, *Talking Politics* (Politics Association), April 2003

END OF QUESTIONS